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Lycoming Historical Society

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History of Fort Freeland

By HON. FREDERIC A. GODCHARLES

RECORD OF THE SOCIETY
1920-1922

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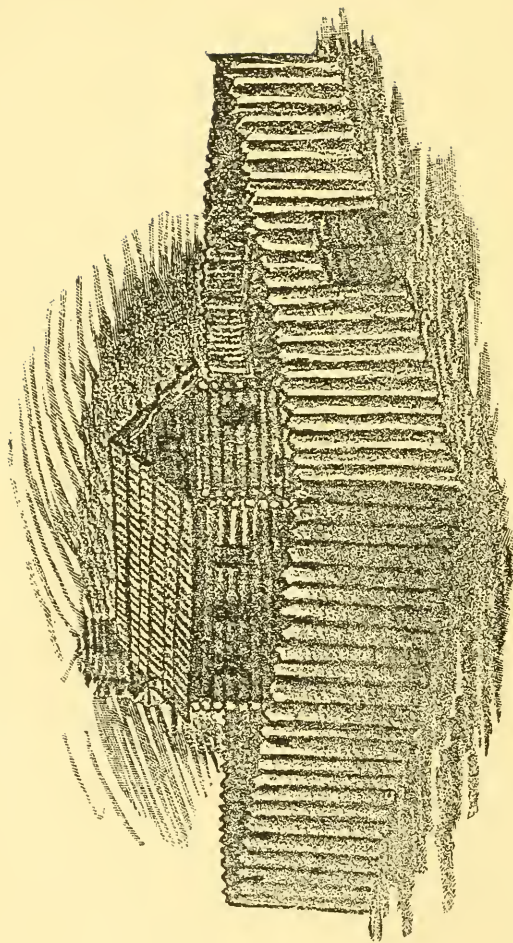
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Fort Freeland¹

Address delivered before the Lycoming Historical Society,
February 27th, 1920

By HON. FREDERIC A. GODCHARLES

On the occasion of the unveiling of a marker on the site of Fort Freeland provided and erected by the Warrior Run Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, an historical address was delivered which elicited much attention and more surprise. For strange as it may seem, many descendants of the very pioneers who lived in and about that blood-stained stockade, were on that day for the first time made acquainted with the story of its long struggle and final destruction in July, 1779. I am sure there were few present who had ever realized that a siege had there taken place during which more were killed and taken prisoners than in many well-known battles of the Revolution, or of the Civil War—nearly as many indeed as our army lost altogether in battle in the Spanish-American War.

The spot has just claim to be regarded as one of the most important, historically, in the beautiful and picturesque Valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. It was the one refuge of terrified settlers in early days when the Indians ravaged the Valley; it was the scene of an invasion by the Connecticut forces who claimed the northern part of the State; and it was the ground of a battle in the Revolution, which, so far from being a skirmish of little importance, was a very definite part of strategy of the British forces which operating against General Sullivan endeavored to restrict and destroy the Continental Army, and did succeed in entirely destroying this stockade.

From our earliest known history, this part of the Valley had been one of the most coveted of the homes and

(1) Copyright, 1922, by Frederic A. Godcharles.

hunting grounds of the Indians. It was occupied by the Andastes, a branch of the great Algonquin family. Like the Hurons of Canada, and the Iroquois of New York, the Andastes fortified their towns, and gave a limited degree of attention to agriculture; while in number and prowess they enjoyed a superiority over the surrounding tribes of the East and South. Captain John Smith, exploring the Chesapeake Bay in 1608, first brought them in contact with the English, from whom they received the tribal designation of Susquehannocks. After many years of warfare, they were finally conquered by the Iroquois in 1675, but not before disease, misfortune and merciless warfare had almost decimated them.

By 1725 this part of Pennsylvania was occupied by the Confederacy known as the Six Nations, and the great Shikellimy was the resident viceroy. For a quarter of a century his name was associated with every important transaction affecting the Indians of the Valley. Early historians establish his residence at Shamokin, now Sunbury, but it is known that he lived also eight miles up the West Branch. One historian has endeavored to prove this Indian town to have been on the west bank; others, that it was at, or near, the mouth of Chillisquaque Creek, on the east bank; while still other authorities place it at the mouth of Limestone Run, now in the very heart of Milton.

Conrad Weiser is authority for the following statement, taken from his diary:—

“Bishop Spangenberg and his party passed over the same route, June 7, 1745, and after passing Chillisquaque Creek, and the site of the Indian town which formerly stood there, they next came to the place where Shikellimy formerly lived, but which was then deserted.”

The “place” to which they next came, noted in this trip, was “Warriors Camp,” near the present site of Watsonstown. In 1753 John, son of Shikellimy, had a hunting lodge at the mouth of Warrior Run, and resided near that place.

FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

The original peaceful intercourse of the trader, the interpreter, and the missionary with the Indians of Sha-

mokin and the adjacent region was abruptly terminated. The latter's dissatisfaction with treaties, and their alliance with the French against the settlers, was followed by the terrible attacks and savageries of the French and Indian war lasting from 1754 to 1760. One of its first consequences to the pioneers of the Valley was the massacre at Penns Creek, October 15, 1755¹. This, and other attacks during the treacherous and almost constant warfare of the Indians against the settlers, caused petitions to be sent to the Provincial Government for fortifications, in which protection might be secured from the assaults of the savages.

These petitions were for a long time disregarded; but as one massacre followed another, the Quakers in authority were finally brought to a realization of the urgent necessity for this protection. Fort Augusta was therefore built in 1756, and equipped with quite a formidable armament². Other forts along the North and West Branches were also ordered to be built and manned, and were named as follows: Fort Jenkins, at a point midway between the present site of Bloomsburg and Berwick; Fort Wheeler, along the banks of Fishing Creek, about three miles from Bloomsburg; Fort McClure, on the bank at Bloomsburg; Fort Bostley, at the forks of the Chillisquaque at Washingtonville; Fort Montgomery, sometimes erroneously called Fort Rice, at Montgomery's, in Paradise Valley, about five miles from Milton; Fort Free-land, on the north side of Warrior Run about six miles north of Milton; Fort Boone, on Muddy Run, one mile above Milton; Fort Swartz, on the east bank of the West Branch, one mile above Milton; Fort Meininger, on the opposite bank, at White Deer Mills; Fort Brady, at Muncy; Fort Muncy, at Halls Station; Fort Antes, opposite Jersey Shore; and Fort Horn, between Pine and McElhattan.

(1) The petition to the Governor following the massacre gives the number of "killed, scalped and carried away" as twenty-five. The settlement was at the mouth of the creek. [Ed.]

(2) Meginness states that in 1758 "it mounted twelve to sixteen pieces of artillery, ranging from six to twelve pounders." "Otzinachson," rev. ed., p. 307. [Ed.]

THE CONNECTICUT INVASION

Hardly had Pennsylvania's troubles in the French and Indian war ceased, than the claims of the Connecticut settlers threatened further bloodshed.

These Connecticut people claimed territory as far south as the 41st degree of latitude, which is just below the town of Milton. Between the 3d and 7th of July, 1772, a large body of the Yankees had come down from Wyoming, and reached the West Branch where Milton now stands. They called the place Judea. Thereupon Colonel Plunkett¹ summoned the Pennamites² to arms, marched to Milton, and drove the invaders away. They retreated towards the Muncy Valley, and made another settlement, where the borough of Muncy is now located³.

(1) William Plunkett, by profession a physician, served in the French Indian war as lieutenant and surgeon near Carlisle. He settled near Chillisquaque Creek on land granted in reward for such services, about 1772, and in the same year was appointed Justice. Fearing his Irish estates would be forfeited he is said to have remained "neutral" during the Revolution. He appears in records of the time as "Doctor," "Justice," and "Colonel." [Ed.]

(2) "Pennamites"—those whose claims were based on grants or patents derived from the Penns. The Connecticut claimants were termed "Yankees." Historians recognize two or three "Yankee-Pennamite Wars." [Ed.]

(3) The Battle of Judea:—"In the early part of May, 1772, a company of New Englanders proceeded from Wyoming down the Susquehanna to Fort Augusta, intending to journey thence up the West Branch to their townships of Charleston and Judea. The object of their journey becoming known to the authorities of the new county of Northumberland, the latter proceeded, by force, to prevent the New Englanders from continuing their journey. In the melee which ensued there were several casualties and some taken as prisoners and detained at Fort Augusta.

Soon as those who escaped from the Provincial forces had returned to Wyoming, a much larger company was immediately organized, and about the middle of June they set out for the West Branch.

By order of the Northumberland County Court early in July, 1772, the posse comitatus was raised and proceeding up the West Branch to the tract of land occupied by Marcus Huling in what is now the very center of Milton, dispersed the Yankees who were collected there. Huling was the agent of the Susquehanna Company on the West Branch, and for his services was given one quarter share of the Company's land which was on Limestone Run, where it empties into the river.

That this battle actually took place, and at the time stated is evidenced from a court record, found in Penna. Archives, Second series, XVIII, 698, which is from the account of Robert King

The Connecticut settlers had been so sure of their ground, that before this one Zebulon Butler¹ had issued a proclamation, and distributed it through Northumberland County, announcing that he had been appointed a justice by Connecticut authorities. This had been met by a proclamation from Governor Penn, strictly forbidding the people to pay any attention to this usurper.

Yet it must be admitted that the Connecticut claimants were not without local support. For it seems that the Vincents, Freelands and other settlers from New Jersey who came to the West Branch Valley about a year after the "Battle of Judea" were attracted by the Connecticut people and manifested sympathy towards their claims. They themselves had settled on their arrival in that part of the County included within the limits of the Susquehanna Company. Freeland's mill was built shortly after his arrival and, as told later, his house was stockaded in 1778.

The armed clash of 1772 by no means settled the dispute; and the continued and determined efforts of the Connecticut claimants to enter and to settle permanently along the West Branch, resulting as it did in the threat of actual armed invasion, so terrified the earlier Pennsylvanians, that a petition, numerously signed, was laid, December, 1773, before the Board of Council, then meeting in Philadelphia. The Council considered the petition of such importance that it was laid before the Assembly, accompanied by a message from Governor John Penn².

The Governor, though a Quaker, recommended that the invaders be repelled by force, and appealed to the

and is in part as follows: "1772—July 3. To myself and horse five days, viz: from 3d to 7th, both days included, collecting the inhabitants of Northumberland County in order to apprehend a party from Wyoming (then Assembled at Marcus Huling's on the West Branch of Susquehanna River), by order of Doc. William Plunket, Esq. £ 1, 17 s. 6d." (From the manuscript, not yet published, "History of Fort Augusta," by Frederic A. Godcharles. The authorities are the Penna. Archives and Harvey's "History of Wilkes-Barre.")

(1) Colonel Butler, whose services in the Revolution and whose narrow escape during the Wyoming massacre made him one of the best known of Pennsylvania's soldiers, died in 1795. [Ed.]

(2) Col. Records, vol. X, p. 117.

magistrates and officials of Northumberland "to be vigilant in the discharge of their duty, and to see that the intruders from Wyoming no longer impose upon the Pennsylvania settlers."

On September 21, 1775, William Maclay advised the Provincial Council, through a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Governor, that the injunction placed on the Connecticut people was no longer binding.¹ Also that Vincent, who had settled just above Milton, claimed to be a magistrate, and was preparing to bring three hundred colonists from Wyoming to the West Branch; that certain settlers were willing to be enlisted in Zebulon Butler's regiment, and that he could not understand why they were so determined to possess these lands.

In the same month it was reported that an armed force had arrived at Freeland's Mills consisting of three hundred men, supposed to be part of Butler's regiment. Judge Plunkett at Sunbury was apprised of this, and a company of fifty men immediately marched from Fort Augusta to "meet and demand the reason of this intrusion and hostile appearance."

The size of this force seems to have been exaggerated. But Colonel Plunkett, under orders from the Provincial Government, detailed a strong force of Northumberland militia, and marched to break up the settlements at Charleston and Judea (Milton). There does not seem to have been much armed resistance, as but one life was lost, and few Connecticut people wounded. After burning the buildings and collecting what property they could carry away, Colonel Plunkett returned to Sunbury with a number of prisoners. The women and children were sent to their friends at Wyoming. William Judd and Joseph Sluman, who appear to have been leaders, were sent to jail at Philadelphia.

(1) * * * * "The Congress, at the last meeting, ordered the memorials respecting the Connecticut intrusion to lie on their table to the next meeting, on the 5th of September. In the meantime their Delegates were directed to enjoy a peaceable behavior on their people. The 5th of September is come and past; the injunction, therefore, is no longer binding, according to their mode of reasoning." * * * *

Three months earlier, Fithian, in his journal written during his visit to the West Branch Valley, under date of July 14th, 1775, describing a delightful visit to the family of Captain William Piper, on Warrior Run, says:

"The people here are all cordial and inveterate enemies of the Yankees, who are settling about in this province on the land in dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania. It is said they are intending to come down into this neighborhood and fix down upon the unsettled land, which exasperates the people generally."

It is evident that these early settlers were between the upper and the nether millstones, the fear of the Connecticut Settlers swooping down and usurping their lands on the one hand¹ and the constant warfare with the savages² on the other. Theirs was indeed a trying experience!

THE REVOLUTION

Through their alliance with the British troops after the outbreak of the Revolution³, Indians began to be very offensive in 1777, and during the latter part of that year, and the beginning of the next, murders became more and more frequent. In April and May, 1778, large parties of Tories and Indians infested the very borders of the settlements in this part of the Province. Life and property became more and more insecure. Most of the able-bodied men were in the Continental army, and their women and children were unprotected.

(1) Mrs. Murray in her "Old Tioga Point and Early Athens" (1908) points out that the last of the Connecticut claims to be settled was the "Welles-Matthewson case." That was closed in 1827. [Ed.]

(2) The Indians felt that they had just grounds for revenge against the white men. In 1757, Indians told the Rev. David Brainerd that "God made two worlds, one for the white men, the other for the Indians; that the white people had no business to come into the Indian country—and that, though the white people made some pretense of instructing them, yet they had no design of doing good, but merely to put money into their own pockets."

(3) Of the number of Indians engaged by England during the Revolutionary War, there were, according to Campell, 12,960 warriors, 1,580 of whom belonged to the Six Nations, 500 were Delawares, 300 Shawnese, 150 Monseys and 60 Mohicans. Of scalps, the Senecas alone, 400 warriors, took 1,052 in three years, 299 being those of women and 29 infants. These were sent to the Governor of Canada, to be sent as a present to the King of England.

By June, the danger had become so great that the inhabitants were seized by panic. They fled to the forts for protection. All the inhabitants of the Valley below Muncy Hill as far as Chillisquaque Creek were assembled at Freeland's Fort, Boone's Fort and Fort Augusta. This, the "Great Runaway," left the country practically abandoned. When it was thought possible, small bands of men ventured cautiously up the river, and into the woods to secure cattle, horses and other effects that had been left behind in the hasty flight for safety. They found small groups of Indians engaged in the work of pillage and destruction, and at night the sky was reddened by the vivid light of the burning cabins and barns.

The urgent appeals of the distressed people to Congress were not entirely in vain. Soldiers were sent to the devastated county. First came Colonel Broadhead, soon hurried to Fort Muncy; General Potter, who returned to Penn's Valley; and Colonel Thomas Hartley, who ordered to the West Branch Valley, arrived in August, 1778, and immediately took steps to offer strong resistance in the event of further attacks. When Colonel Hartley, late in the year 1778, was ordered to another field of duty, his departure was a matter of sincere regret, for his success in fighting the Indians had done much to restore confidence among the settlers. His withdrawal proved to be a disastrous move for the Valley.

Six years before this time, in the year 1772, as noted before, in my comment, on the Connecticut invasion, Jacob Freeland, Samuel Gould, Peter Vincent and his son, and Timothy Williams, with their families, had cut their way through the woods, and settled along Warrior Run. They came from Essex County, New Jersey. Jacob Freeland brought with him the irons for a grist mill, and during 1773 and 1774 he built a mill on Warrior Run, about four miles back from the river. It was stockaded, in the fall of 1778, by Freeland and his neighbors, and enclosed his large two-story house. The spring of water enclosed is still used.

The first mention of this place as a fort is in a letter of Colonel Samuel Hunter, written from Fort Augusta, April 27, 1779, addressed to "His Excellency, Joseph

Reed, Esqr., President of the Supreme Executive Council," then sitting in Philadelphia. In this he says:—

"Yesterday, there was another party of indians, about thirty or forty, kill'd and took seven of our Militia, that was stationed at a little Fort near Muncy Hill, call'd Fort Freedom; there was two or three of the inhabitants taken prisoners; among the latter is James McKnight, Esqr, one of our Assemblymen; the same day a party of thirteen of the inhabitants that went to hunt their Horses, about four or five miles from Fort Muncy was fired upon by a large party of Indians, and all taken or killed Except one man. Captain Walker of the Continental troops, who commands at that post, turned out with thirty four men to the place he heard the firing, and found four men kill'd and scalped, and supposes they Captured ye Remainder."

This massacre was also reported to the Council by William Maclay, on the same date. He says:—

"The whole Force of the Six Nations seems to be poured down upon Us. How long we will be able to bear up under such complicated and Severe attacks, God only knows."

In a long letter of instructions sent by President Reed to Colonel Samuel Hunter, under date of June 2d, 1779, he says:—

"You may always rely upon our utmost attention to every thing which concerns your safety and hope you will diffuse a spirit of Confidence thro the inhabitants of the county of which they will soon see the beneficent consequences."

With General John Sullivan placed in command of Continental troops sent to protect the settlers along the North and West Branches, and General Potter given command of troops under him, the settlers were more comfortable and their confidence strengthened.

Lt.-Colonel Adam Hubley, of the 11th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line, in an official communication sent to President Reed, dated Sunbury, June 21st, 1779, began with this paragraph:—

"I take the liberty of acquainting you of my arrival at this post, at present every thing about this seems quiet—the refugees here talk of returning again to their farms. I'm in hopes they will be able peaceably to enjoy them."

It seems that this peaceable occupation of their farms was not to be enjoyed. The Indians becoming bolder on account of their previous successes, pushed down the Valley, crossed Muncy Hills and on June 21st, the very date of Hubley's letter, surprised several men at work in a

cornfield near Fort Freeland. A son of Jacob Freeland and Isaac Vincent were killed, and Michael Freeland and Benjamin Vincent were taken prisoners.

Under date of June 26th, 1779, Colonel Hunter wrote to President Reed, apologizing for not being able to afford General Sullivan more assistance in the transportation and guarding of stores en route to Wyoming, and says:—

“All the Militia I could Collect Exclusive of what was at Fort freeland & General Potter’s, was about thirty, which I ordered to stay at Sunburry to Guard the Stores there, until the Continental troops Returned from Wyoming.”

A postscript to this letter was:—

“I Recd a letter from Major General Sullivan inclosing an Extract of your letter dated ye 3d Inst.” (in which President Reed wrote of the qualifications and experience of General Potter in the work on the Frontiers) “to order up the Ranging Company Raised for the Defence of this County to Wyoming, as he finds his numbers Rather short of what he Expected, Col. Hubley’s Regiment marches Immediately which leaves Fort Muncy and Fort Jenkins Vacant at this Critical time when its out of my Power to man them the time of Harvest with the militia of this County.”

This proves beyond the semblance of a doubt that Fort Freeland was at that time considered a strong strategic post, for it, and Fort Boone, became the only places garrisoned by Continental soldiers above Fort Augusta on the West Branch. That the removal of the troops from above Fort Freeland was a mistake is made manifest by the letter of Colonel Hunter to Colonel Matthew Smith, written from Fort Augusta, 23d July, 1779.

“Dear Sir, we have Really Distressing times at present in this County Occasioned by the late Depredations committed by the Savages on our Defenceless Frontiers, Immediately after the Evacuation of Fort Muncy, the Indians began their cruel murders again—the 3d Inst they killed three men, & took two Prisoners at Lycoming—the eighth Inst., they burned the Widow Smiths Mills & killed one man, 17th Inst, they killd two men, and took three Prisoners from Fort Brady, the same day they Burned Starrets Mills & all the Princeable Houses in Muncy Township, the 20th Inst, they killed three men at Freelands Fort, and took two Prisoners, them sticking so close to this County after the Continentall troops has marched to Wyoming has intimidated the people so much that they are Realy on the Eve of deserting the County intirely as there is no Prospect of any assistance, that the People on the Frontiers Could get their Harvists put up. I thought the army marching Even to Wyoming

would Draw the attention of the Savages from us, but I think it never was worse than at present, and without some Reinforcements is sent to this County soon from some of our neighbouring Countys its not probable the little Forts we have at Freelands and Boons can stand long, suppose I never see the People of this County behave more spirited than they do at present, suppose Reduced to a few, I have Just arrived after being on a Scout along Muncy Hill & we made a great Discovery where the Savages had been along the Frontiers & taken off a number of Horses. We are scarce of ammunion Especially Lead there is none."

Samuel Brady, a brother of Captain John Brady, and himself one of the bravest and most persistent of those who actually drove the red-skin from this Valley, was present at Fort Muncy when his brother, Captain John, was killed in ambuscade; and it was he who rushed out, followed by some of the garrison, and bore his brother into the fort. He pressed the pursuit of the Indians with undeviating energy, following some of them as far as Fort Bedford. He and his men returned afterwards to Fort Freeland.

During these campaigns Brady had a close companion, a little Irishman named Dougherty. On one occasion at Fort Freeland, the main body of the garrison had crossed the West Branch on a scouting expedition, leaving Captain Brady and Dougherty as the only protectors of the women and children in the fort. A scouting party of British and Indian allies suddenly appeared and demanded the surrender of the fort. Brady refused, and he and Dougherty immediately opened a defensive fire upon their enemies, while the women loaded their rifles. After a sharp fight, during which more than one of the invaders was stretched out on the ground, the temporarily absent garrison returned, crossed the river and raised the siege.

But a short time before the destruction of the fort, Mrs. McKnight and Mrs. Durham, who was afterwards scalped by the Indians, started on a trip from Fort Freeland to Northumberland on horseback, their husbands making the journey afoot. Each woman carried a small child in her arms. Near the mouth of Warrior Run, they were fired upon by a party of Indians, and Mrs. McKnight's horse suddenly wheeled about and galloped back

to the fort. As the horse turned, her child slipped from her arms, but she grabbed it by the foot, and held it in this position until the frightened animal brought them safely to the stockade.

The sagacity of these early frontiersmen revealed to them how grave the situation was, for Colonel Hunter's letter of the 23rd had not been delivered before the most serious trouble occurred. A letter from William Maclay, dated Paxton, July 26th, 1779, says:—

"I am just returned from Sunbury—I must say a Word or Two of the deplorable Situation of Northumberland County; Stript of the whole of the Standing Army, and without a single Man save the Militia of the County and 14 men under the Command of a Capt. Kamplin, and almost every Young Man on the Frontier engaged in the Boat Service; they suffer more than ever, from the Savage Depredations of an horrid Enemy; everything above Muncy Hill is abandoned; a large Body of about forty Savages had penetrated as far as Freeland's Mills; Freeland and Sundry others have fallen Victims to them; They were still hovering about the Settlement when I came away; In short nothing seems wanting on their part But a proper degree of Spirit (and upon some occasions they have manifested enough of it) for to make one bold push for Sunbury and destroy the Magazine which is now collecting there for the Support of the Army."

Alas, how accurately these soldiers reported the distressed situation! Only two days later the final tragedy occurred. Colonel McDonald with British troops and Indians moved to the attack¹. When the battle for possession of the fort began, the firing could be heard at Fort Boone, about four miles south. Captain Hawkins Boone, with the garrison, consisting of a party of thirty-two as brave men as ever fired a gun, rushed to the relief of the unfortunate defenders of Fort Freeland².

But in a few terrible hours the most advanced haven of refuge for the frontier settlers in the West Branch Valley was a mass of ruins: its defenders either victims of the tomahawk or prisoners of war: the women and children objects of charity in the stronger fortification of Fort Augusta. That the defenders of Fort Freeland

(1) Wolfinger, in Egle's, "History of Penna.," says, 200 British and 300 Indians; Meginness, in "Otzinachson," says, 100 British and 200 Indians. [Ed.]

(2) The number of effective defenders in Fort Freeland is given as but 21. [Ed.]

did their utmost in this trying hour is beyond the semblance of a doubt, and the resistance they offered was so stubborn that the articles of surrender were not accepted until all their ammunition was expended and no further relief believed possible.

A scout, by the name of McMahon, who knew the lay of the land, was sent in advance of Boone's party. He reached the fort at the moment of its capitulation, but, not knowing this, jumped across Warrior Run and shook hands with some of the men coming out of the fort, who told him they were prisoners of war. Without a moment's hesitation, McMahon turned, leaped back across the Run, and dashed towards Fort Boone. In his escape he saw the earth torn up on either side of him by the bullets fired by the victorious British and Indians, but none hit him.

As soon as the fort capitulated, the Indians took possession of it, and their squaws became mischievous and destructive. They ripped open the feather beds, emptying the contents in a heap and burning them, while they danced about with fiendish glee. They packed the ticks with clothes and goods, destroying whatever they could not carry away. Having completed the pillage of the fort, both Indians and Tories gathered together all the provisions they could find, and proceeded to the creek, where they made preparations for a feast. The squaws with their plunder rode away on the side saddles they had stolen, in mockery of the white women¹

(1) The Indians engaged in this campaign were under command of Hiokatoo, commonly called Gardow, the second husband of Mary Jemison, "the white woman of the Genesee." He was a noted Seneca chief and most cruel and terrible as a warrior.

Hiokatoo was born in one of the tribes of the Six Nations that inhabited the banks of the Susquehanna. He was own brother to Farmer's Brother, a chief who has been justly celebrated for his worth.

In 1731 he was appointed a runner, to assist in collecting an army to go against the Cotawpes, Cherokees and other southern Indians. He was present when the northern Indians rushed upon the ambuscade and murdered 1,200 of their southern enemies.

During the French War he was in every battle that was fought on the Susquehanna and Ohio Rivers. At Braddock's

The savages did not, however, enjoy their feast in quiet, for Boone's party soon arrived on the opposite bank of the creek, within less than one hundred yards of where the enemy was feasting. Not knowing that the fort had been surrendered, and the unequal struggle terminated, the men from Fort Boone fired on the British and Indians. At least thirty of the savages fell dead at the first volley¹. It was a brief triumph, for the others quickly rallied and surrounded the Continentals, killing thirteen men, among the slain being Captain Boone himself. When his party thus found itself caught in an ambuscade, word was passed among them for each to save himself, and realizing the hopelessness of further resistance, with odds nearly ten to one, the fight was given up, while each did his best to escape².

These brave fellows were closely hunted by the savages, who feared them and their possible reprisals, and several made narrow escapes. One William Reed started to run, but a hot pursuit was made by the enemy. He was a tall, slender fellow, and being a swift runner outstripped his pursuers, until he tripped over a tree root, and fell, losing his gun, the barrel of which he found years later, with the stock rotted away. When Reed after regaining his feet finally reached a place of safety, it was found that a bullet had grazed his breast, cutting the skin as if a hot iron had branded him. This scar was visible until his death. Another shot had pierced his hat,

defeat he took two white prisoners and burnt them alive in a fire of his own kindling.

Mary Jemison, in writing of her husband's part in the battle at Fort Freeland says: "After the fort was surrendered, the women and children were sent under an escort to the next fort below, and the men and boys taken off by a party of British to the general Indian encampment. As soon as the fort had capitulated and the firing had ceased, Hiokatoo with the help of a few Indians tomahawked every wounded American while earnestly begging with uplifted hands for quarters." Truly a terrible record to give her husband. His health was unusually good until attacked with consumption four years before his death which occurred in the month of November, 1811, at the advanced age of 103 years.

(1) So some accounts. John Buyers (in *Penna. Archives*, vol. vii, p. 592) says 8 or 10. His letter is quoted below. [Ed.]

(2) The account in Egle's "*Hist. of Penna.*," lacks much in accuracy.—[Ed.]

and his shirt was shot in several places,—truly a miraculous escape! He was one of the few survivors who lived many years after the occurrence, and he could relate many incidents of that bloody battle.

The noise of the battle was heard also by John Montgomery, living at "Paradise." He mounted two of his young sons on horses and sent them to the top of the hill to "learn the cause of the firing." On arriving at the brow of the hill, overlooking the creek, they discovered the fort to be burning and a fight raging in the woods below them. They returned and reported to their father, who hurriedly loaded up his family in a wagon, with such provisions and clothing as they could carry, and drove across the country to the cabin of William Davis, on Limestone Run. Davis after learning what was going on, gathered up his family also and joined the Montgomerys in their flight to Fort Augusta. The Indians and Tories burned Montgomery's house and destroyed his growing crops. Mr. Montgomery took his family to Paxtang, where they remained until the close of the war, when he returned to his old home at the spring.

Colonel Samuel Hunter wrote to Colonel Matthew Smith, July 28th:—

"This Day, about twelve o'clock, an Express arrived from Capt. Boon's mill, informing us that Freeland's Fort was surrounded by a party of Indians, and Immediately after that another Express came, informing that it was Burned and all the Garrison Either killed or taken prisoners; the party that went from Boon's see a Number of Indians & some Red Coats walking Round the Fort (or where it had been) after that there was a firing heard off towards Chillisquake, which makes us believe that the Savages is numerous, and partys is going off from this Town and Northumbd to ye Relief of the Garrison at Boon's, as there is a number of Women and Children; there was at Freeland's Fort fifty Women and Children, and about thirty men and God knows what is become of them; by this you may know our Distress'd Situation at this present time. General Sullivan would send us no Assistance, and our Neighboring Countys has lost the Virtue they were once Possessed of, or otherwise we would had some Relief before this time; this I write in a Confused manner, as I am Just marching of up the West Branch, with the party we have Collected. Rouse ye inhabitants there or we are all Ruined here."

This letter was dispatched by Doctor Francis Alison, Jr.,¹ who on the same day wrote to President Reed, saying:—

“Fort Freeland, the most advanced Post on the frontiers of the west branch, had on Wednesday last three of the Garrison killed & scalped (one only shot) within sixty Yards of the fort, and two made prisoners; their Number of Indians appeared to be upwards of thirty in the open View of the Garrison. Relief was sent immediately from Boon’s Fort and the two Towns, & additional force was left behind to ye assistance, notwithstanding which they attacked them this morning, & by Intelligence received from persons of credit, sent out as spies, they had surrounded the fort—The Forts and Barns in Ashes, the mill still standing, & and the Indians appeared very numerous, among whom were some Red Coats, supposed to be Regulars—that thirty-four men had turned out from Boon’s Fort, to relieve Freeland’s Fort, of whom there is not the least intelligence. The Garrison of Freeland F. consisted of thirty-two men, fourteen of whom were nine months men. We have just heard ye Capt Boon is killed.”

Colonel Hunter the same day says:—

“Yesterday Morning, Early, there was a party of Indians & Regular Troops atacted Fort Freeland; the Fort and Houses adjacent set on fire. Capt Boon and his party fired briskly on ye Enemy, but was soon surrounded by a large party of Indians; there was thirteen killd of our People and Capt Boon himself among the Slain. The Regular Officer that Commanded was the name of McDonald; he let the Women and Children go after haveing them a Considerable time in Custoday. The Town of Northumberland was the Frontier last night, and I am afraid Sunbury will be this night. There was about three Hundred of ye Enimy, & the one third of them was white men, as the Prisoners informs us, that made their Escape. It must be Butler’s party.”

John Buyers, writing to William Maclay the same day confirms Colonel Hunter’s statements when he says:—

“Freelands fort was attackted by Not less than 300 british troops & Indians they acted on the defensive as long as they could well but found it impractable to hold out any longer

(1) Dr. Francis Alison, Jr., was Senior Surgeon of Hospitals Middle Department during the Revolution. He was sent to Sunbury May, 1779, to erect hospitals for the reception of the sick and wounded of General Sullivan’s army. Just prior to entering the hospital service, Dr. Alison was commissioned surgeon, 12th Regiment, Pennsylvania Line. He was a son of Rev. Francis Alison, D.D., Vice Provost, University of Pennsylvania. He was born in Chester County March 28, 1751, and died in Chester County, May 11, 1813.

after the Enemay had sent in three flags desiring them to surrender the Last Mentioning if they did not they would put them to the sword every one, the officer Who commanded the garison Capitulated on these terms, viz., that the men should be prisoners of warr, the women & Children were to down to the toune Nmd & Sunbury unmolested, the whole killed in the fort was four men, Capt. boon who went out for their Relief fell in with the Enemy Capt. Kompton who observed the first Indian on guard shot him dead on the Spot then a party ralyed out of the mill and defated bon's Company, killed boon, Capt. doharty, Capt. hamilton & all the Rest or took of the party only 13 escaped Northud is now the frunteer. Wee do not find that there was more than eight or ten of the Enemy killed."

Another letter written the same day by Francis Alison, Jr., to Colonel Joshua Elder, Lt. of Lancaster County, says:—

"Sr, Since mine of the 28th we have received particular Instructions from Ft. Freeland, by women who had been in the Fort—They say the garrison Surrendered after making a noble but short resistance, & and after being thrice summoned; they Capitulated in form the Copy of it has not yet come to hand. Of the Garrison four were killed, & thirteen Scalpes were brought into the fort in a Pocket Handkerchief amongst whome were Capt. Boone & Dougherty's supposed to belong to a party from Boones Fort wch attacked the British, Indians &c., and even got in among the people who were prisoners with them, but were obliged to fly on acct of superiority of numbers, 13 or 14 of ye party have come in; they and the women of F. F. estimate the number of the Enemy at between 3 & 4 hundred, one third of whom are Regular Troops. Boones F., is evacuated & Northumberland Town is already the Frontier—Hurry if possible all the assistance possible with utmost haste, or else the Consequences on our side will be dreadful."

William Maclay writes to Council from Paxton, July 30th, 1779. "The worst that we can fear for Northumberland County is like to happen." He then describes the attack, and concludes his letter:—

"The Situation of Northumberland County, beyond description distressing, not a single Inhabitant north of Northumberland Town—These facts ascertained by Letters from Col. Hunter, Doctr. Alison and others by espress this moment arrived No Expectation of Relief from Gen. Sullivan. I need not ask you what is to be done, Help Help; or the Towns of Sunbury and Northumberland must fall; our whole Frontier laid open, and the Communication with Gen. Sullivan's army is cut off."

Major General Sullivan was promptly advised of the fate of the garrison at Fort Freeland, for on July 30th he

wrote to Colonel Hunter from his headquarters at Wyoming:—

“I rece’d this Day the Disagreeable intelligence of the loss of Fort Freeland, your situation in Consequence must be unhappy, I feel for you and could wish to assist you, but the good of the service will not admit of it—Nothing can so Effectually draw the indians out of your Country, as carrying the War into theirs, Tomorrow morning I shall march with the Whole Army for Tioga.”

Truly not much consolation for Colonel Hunter and the distressed and suffering settlers. Moreover Colonel Matthew Smith did not place much faith in General Sullivan. In a letter dated July 30, he says he knew nothing would be done;—“indeed the General seems to have had it in View from his first Arrival at Wyoming to have the County Reduced to what it now is.”

William Maclay, in a second letter written to Council on July 30th, says:—

“The Distress of the Flying Inhabitants great beyond Description. The Design of the Enemy supposed to be the Possession of the Towns of Sunbury and Northumberland, and of the Stores to be found there—and of Course cutting the Communication with Gen. Sullivan’s army. It is even said That another Body of the Enemy are following McDonald.”

In a third letter to Council, all written the same day, he inclosed letters from Colonel Hunter and others, and adds:—

“I will go up tomorrow to Carlisle and endeavour to prevail on the artificers who are embodied at that place to march immediately to Sunbury. It is likely I may be refused. Several Volunteers have promised to march for Sunbury.”

When you remember that William Maclay was one of the really strong characters of that day, and one of the first United States Senators from Pennsylvania, these letters of his clearly show that the situation in Northumberland County was most serious, and that the attack on Fort Freeland was a definitely planned manœuvre of the British army, with a definite object, and not merely a casual Indian incursion against defenseless settlers. This attack, with its consequent heavy toll of life and prisoners, and its importance at that critical period of the Revolution, should therefore have a more conspicuous place

than has been given it in the history of our Commonwealth during those early days.

Colonel Smith wrote to President Reed, from Paxtang, July 31st, 1779:—

“For my Part, I think the Distresses of Northumberland County People Equal, if not Superior to anything that has happend to any Part of the Continent Since the Commencement of the Present War.”

He referred to letters from many persons whose word could be relied upon, then added:—

“The Accts this Moment is, the Town of Northumberland is Evacuated; if so, then Sunbury will soon follow the Example, and the Same frontier will be where it was twenty years Past.”

He then wrote of a meeting called at Paxtang, where committees were appointed to relieve this distress and recruit volunteers; told of prominent men and officers interested in the meetings, and added:—

“No inconsiderable Number attendd, and Proposd a Scheme for Volontiers to turn out Immediately for the Relief of the Distressd People. We have fixed Sunday Morning, Eight O’Clock, to march, when, I Doubt not, at least fifty Men will Go that way.”

Colonel Smith commanded the relief expedition which arrived at Sunbury August 3rd. In reporting this movement, he says:—

“I have arrivd at Sunbury, with Sixty Paxtang Boys, the neighboring Townships turns out a Number of Volantiers, Cumberland County will give a Considerable Assistance, tomorrow at 12 o’Clock is fixt for the time of March, Provisions is Scarce, But we intend to follow the Savages, we hope to Come at them, as they Number of Cattle, is Great, they have taken, from the Coutrey & must make a Slow Progress on their Return home—I hope to See them on their Return & Doubt not if we Do, to Give a Good Acct. I inclose a Copy of the Capitulation at Fort Freeland, the Captn McDonald of the Rangers, is formerly a Sergeant in Col. Montgomery’s Regt of Highlanders, his humanity has Appeard in this one Instance—Perhaps the first in this war, fifty two Women & Children Came safe to this place, being the Number Taken—four old Men also was Admitted to Come Back, the Enemy Supposd them not fit to March to Niagara. inclosd is a list of the Number of Capt Boon’s party killd, also the names of the Persons belonging to the Garrison. this Acct I Believe is the Fact as the party out yesterday have Buryd the Dead, Gave me the List. the Distress of the people here is Great—you may have some Conception, but Scarcely Can be told—

this town (Sunbury) now Composes Northumberland County. the Enemy have Burnt, Everywhere they have Been, houses, Barnes, Rice & Wheat, in the fields, stocks of hay, &c; is all Consumd—Such Devastation I have not yet Seen.”

This is the testimony of a seasoned soldier, one who had suffered extremities in the French and Indian war, who had been held for a time a prisoner of war, and who later became a hero of the Revolution. His list of the casualties is as follows:—

“Those kill’d at Freeland’s Fort in Capt. Boon’s party.
Capt. Boon, Capt. Saml Dougherty, Jeremiah McGlahglen, Natte Smith, John Jones, Edwd Costikan, Ezra Green, Samuel Neel, Matt’w McClintock, Hugh McGill, Andw Woods,
a total of eleven.

Killd in the fort,
Jas Watt, John McClintock, Wm McClung, James Miles, and Henry Gilfillen.”

The terms of the surrender of Fort Freeland were as follows:—

“Articles of Capitulation Entd into Between Capt John McDaniel On his Majesties part & John Little on that of the Congress.

Article 1st. The Men in Garrison to March out & Ground their Arms in the Green, in front of the fort which is to be taken in Possession of Immediately by his Majesty’s Troops.

Agreed too.

2dly. All Men Bearing Arms are to Surrender themselves Prisoners of War & to be Sent to Niagara.

Agd too.

3d. The Women and Children not to be Stript of their Cloathing nor Molested by the Indians and to be at Liberty to Move Down the Country where they please.

Agd too.

JOHN McDONALD, Capt. of Rangers.
JOHN LITTLE.”¹

President Reed replied to the urgent appeals of Colonel Hunter, Colonel Smith, John Weitzel and others. Resolutions were promptly passed by Council, and those

(1) Pennsylvania Archives vol. VII, p. 611.

in high authority realized for the first time that it was a serious blunder, as President Reed writes:—

“—to find our best Measures defeated partly by the Neglect and Misconduct of our own Officers & partly by the very improper Conduct of some Persons of Weight & Influence who from Party views did all in their Power to distract and censure the People we were constrained to trust the Defence of the Frontiers to Providence and the small exertions of the People, immediately interested.”

He then admonished the officers to do all in their power to “extinguish all disputes, &c.” and promised:—

“If I could flatter myself this happy Spirit would prevail I should have Pleasure in visiting the County & examining the State of the Militia—This I shall endeavour to do this Fall if other Publick Business will admit.”

The full effect of the loss at Fort Freeland was not known for some time. A week after the attack Col. Hunter advised President Reed that “the Enemy has Plundered and burned the Country within ten or twelve miles, there is a number of familys in Distress, having nothing left them to subsist upon.”

Captain John Lee,¹ the third Captain in a most patriotic and distinguished early family of Pennsylvania, owned considerable property within a short distance of Freeland's Mills. During the time of the bloody incursions, John Lee was firm, and his resolution was a great comfort to the panic-stricken settlers. After the destruction of the fort, and its capitulation, the savage victors committed indiscriminate plunder and murder. They immediately proceeded to the house of Captain Lee, knowing that he possessed a well-filled money chest. At first they rushed by members of the frightened family, without injuring anyone, into the apartment where the chest lay. Captain Lee just at this time was returning from the fields. He was shot and killed. Two of his sons, young men, were slaughtered at the threshold of the home. His wife, with a suckling babe in her arms, and four other children, were led away captive. Two miles from the house, the baby's brains were dashed out against a tree; the tears and weeping of the mother caused the savages to end her sufferings with the barbarous tomahawk.

(1) See Judge Henry's letter to Secretary of War in the matter of Washington Lee's application for army appointment. Egle, N. & Q. 1896, pp. 110-111.

The survivors of this unfortunate family, two girls and two boys, none of them above twelve years of age, were held in Indiana in bondage until 1784-85. When Robert Lee learned the whereabouts of his brother Thomas, he made arrangements to have him brought to Tioga Point, where he was turned over to his friends. Such was his love of Indian life, after so many years of captivity, that they were obliged to tie him, to prevent his escape, when placing him on board a canoe. When near Wilkes-Barre he was untied, but as soon as the canoe touched shore he jumped out and ran away. It was several hours before he was again caught. Upon finally arriving at Northumberland, he evinced all the sullenness of a captive, and Indian boys and girls had to be brought to play with him before he showed any disposition to be satisfied with his new home. At last he began to ask questions, and inquire for his relatives, and by degrees again became civilized. Both Thomas and Robert afterwards became officers in the U. S. Army. Rebecca Lee and her sister were also restored to their relatives, through the efforts of their uncle, Capt. Andrew Lee, a distinguished Revolutionary hero.

True to his promise, William Maclay arrived at Sunbury, and on August 5th wrote to Council:—"It is with sincere pleasure That I inform you That the Martial Spirit is not yet extinct on the Frontiers of Pennsylvania." He stated that the object of the attack was the magazine at Fort Augusta, the cutting off of communication with General Sullivan,—that it awakened the inhabitants; that there were five hundred volunteers at Fort Augusta as he wrote. He added:—

"'Tis said McDonald, in some instances, restrained the impetuosity of the Savages with respect to the Prisoners. None, however, of Boon's Men were made Prisoners. The Enemy were amazingly fond of Plunder; everything, however, which they could not take away was destroyed."

In further raids the victorious Indians and Tories pillaged and plundered the inhabitants of Milton, and burned Huling's Mill and Tavern on Limestone Run. But the troops under Colonel Matthew Smith arrived in the forsaken county at last, and no further trouble was experienced. This old warrior became a prominent resident of

the county, and its most distinguished citizen. He was for a short period the Vice President of the Commonwealth, also a member of the Supreme Executive Council. He spent the last fifteen years of his life as a resident of Milton. The following obituary appeared in Kennedy's Gazette, July 30th, 1794:

"Died, the 22nd inst., about sunset, at Milton, Colonel Matthew Smith, aged fifty-four years, being one of the first patriots for liberty; went to Canada in the year 1755 and suffered extremities. He was once prothonotary of Northumberland County. Was interred 23rd instant, attended by a number of his friends and acquaintances, together with the volunteer company of light infantry from Milton, conducted by Major Pratt and commanded by Captain James Boyd, who after marching about six miles to Warrior Run burying grounds and shedding a tear over the old patriot's grave, deposited his remains with three well directed volleys and returned home in good order."

Linn's, "Annals of Buffalo Valley," adds that "his body was carried by these soldiers from Milton to Warrior Run."

Notwithstanding the authority of the foregoing quotations, and others equally as reliable, to be found in the Colonial Records and Penna. Archives, interesting corroboration of this history of the Fort is afforded by the following interesting letter written by Mrs. Mary V. Derrickson, at Delaware Run, Dec. 7th, 1855. She was born in Fort Freeland and her recollection of those stirring events was remarkably clear and faithful.

Delaware Run, Dec. 17th, 1855.

Sir,

In compliance with your request I will give, (so far as my memory will serve) all the account of the early settlers, and occupants of Fort Freeland. The fort was situated on the Warrior-run Creek about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles above where it empties into the Susquehanna River.

In the year 1772, Jacob Freeland, Samuel Gould, Peter Vincent, John Vincent and his son Cornelius Vincent and Timothy Williams with their respective families cut their way through, and settled within some two miles of where the fort was afterwards built—they were from Essex County, N. J. Jacob Freeland brought the irons for a Grist Mill, and in the years '73 & '4 he built one on the Warrior run.

There were several more families moved up from the same place, and they lived on friendly terms with the Indians, until '77, when they began to be troublesome and to remove their own families in the summer of '78, they had to leave the country and when they returned in the fall they picketed

around a large two story log house (which had been built by Jacob Freeland for his family), inclosing half an acre of ground, the timbers were set close and were about 12 feet high, the gate was fastened with bars inside. Into this fort or house the families of Jacob Freeland, Sen., Jacob Freeland, Jr., John Little, Michael Freeland, John Vincent, Peter Vincent, George Pack, Cornelius Vincent, Moses Kirk, James Durham, Samuel Gould, Isaac Vincent and Daniel Vincent, all gathered and lived that winter. In November, Geo. Pack, son of George Pack was born, and on the 10th of February, 1779, I was born, my father was Cornelius Vincent, and on the 20th of May, George, son of Isaac Vincent was born.

In the spring of '79, the men planted corn, but were occasionally surprised by the Indians, but nothing serious occurred untill the 21st day of July, as some of them were at work in a cornfield back of the fort, they were attacked by a party of Indians about 9 o'clock A. M., and Isaac Vincent, Elias Freeland and Jacob Freeland, Jr., were killed, and Benjamin Vincent and Michael Freeland were taken prisoners. Daniel Vincent was chased by them, but he out ran them, and escaped by leaping a very high log fence. When the Indians surprised them, Benjamin Vincent (then 10 years of age) hid himself in a furrow, but he thought he would be more secure by climbing a tree as there was a woods near but they saw him and took him prisoner, he was ignorant of the fate of the others, until about 2 o'clock P. M., when an Indian thrust a bloody scalp in his face, and he knew it was his (and my) brother Isaac's hair.

Nothing again occurred until the morning of the 29th, about daybreak, as Jacob Freeland, Sen., was going out of the gate, he was shot and fell inside of the gate. The fort was surrounded by about 300 British and Indians, commanded by Capt'n McDonnald; there were but 21 men in the fort, and but little ammunition; Mary Kirk and Phebe Vincent commenced immediately and run all their spoons and plates into bullets; about 9 o'clock there was a flag of truce raised, and John Little and John Vincent went out to capitulate, but could not agree. They had half an hour given them to consult with those inside, at length they agreed, that all who were able to bear arms should go as prisoners, and the old men and women and children set free, and the fort given up to plunder, they all left the fort by 12 o'clock P. M. Not one of them having eaten a bite that day, and not a child was heard to cry or ask for bread that day. They reached Northumberland, 18 miles distance that night, and there drew their rations, the first they had to eat that day.

When Mrs. Kirk heard the terms on which they were set free she put female clothes on her son William, a lad of 16, and he escaped with the women.

Mrs. Elizabeth Vincent was a cripple, she could not walk. Her husband John Vincent went to Capt'n McDonnald and told him of her situation, and said if he had the horse, that the Indians had taken from his son Peter the week before that she could ride, and about day light the next morning the horse, came to them, he had carried his wife to the lower end of the meadow where they lay and saw the fort burned.

and it rained so hard that night that she lay mid side in water, when the horse came he striped the bark off a hickory tree and plaited a halter, set his wife on and led it to Northumberland where there were wagons pressed, to take them on down the country.

In the fall of '78 as a company of the settlers were leaving the country on account of the Indians, they were fired at, and Mrs. Durham's infant was killed in her arms, she fell with it and they came and tomahawked and scalped her, and when the men went to count the dead, she raised up and asked for a drink of water. Elias Williams, one of the men, ran to the river and brought his hat full of water and gave her a drink, they then put her in a canoe and took her to Northumberland, where Dr. Plunket dressed her head, she recovered and lived about 50 years. Her body was afterwards lain in Warrior-run burying ground, about a half mile off where the fort stood.

And now, Sir, my task is done if it gives you any information of which you were not in possession I am glad to have done it.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

MARY V. DERRICKSON.¹

At the time this letter was written, the pickets of a portion of the fence which surrounded the fort were still standing, showing its actual size and location.

The inhabitants of Fort Freeland should not have been taken by surprise. Job Chilloway had forewarned them of the coming invasion, as had another friendly Indian, and also Robert Covenhoven, the spy and scout. The latter had been sent by Colonel Hepburn to ascertain and report the movements of the enemy. He travelled alone on his dangerous enterprise, and during his perilous journey was many times near death or capture. When he reached Fort Muncy on his return, he informed Colonel Hepburn of the impending danger; and as the enemy's forces were too strong to resist, the women and children in that fort were hastily placed in boats and sent down the river to Fort Augusta. Covenhoven notified those at Fort Menninger and also at Fort Freeland², but at the latter place the assembled settlers thought the scout

(1) Included in "Penna. Archives," Voll XII, pp. 364-366. Mrs. Derrickson at the time of the massacre was but five months old. Her recollections are therefore recollections of what she was told later. [Ed.]

(2) So Meginness says, but the article in "Frontier Forts" notes—"but it is said Fort Freeland did not get notice." [Ed.]

was magnifying the danger, and they decided to remain. The garrison at Fort Boone also remained behind.

Ammunition was scarce and difficult to obtain, which accounts for the necessity during the battle of having the women melt their spoons and pewter plate into bullets. Yet with attacks occurring so frequently, it appears to us, at this date, that the garrison should have been better prepared for this final assault.

The effect of the fall of Fort Freeland was most disastrous to this region, accompanied as it was by the death of Captains Hawkins Boone and Samuel Dougherty and their brave comrades, by the desertion of Fort Boone as a post of defense, and the leaving of Fort Augusta uncovered and easy of access by the enemy. Colonel Hunter held this important base with such a feeble force that it would have discouraged a less courageous commander. In November the German Battalion was sent to him. This consisted of one hundred and twenty men. They secured the base, and then were dispatched to build Fort Montgomery. Fort Swartz, above Milton; and Fort Jenkins, near Bloomsburg, each of these fortifications being garrisoned, and ten men stationed, as further safeguard, at Bostley's Mills.

Of the prisoners captured at the assault, but few ever again returned to their families, most of them having succumbed to the privations of the long weary march to Canada, with its indescribable hardships, scarcity of food, and cruel treatment.

James, a brother of Captain Samuel Dougherty, who was killed with his comrade Captain Hawkins Boone, was one of those taken prisoner who survived the march to Canada. When peace was declared he returned to Boston. He was the only one of seven brothers who died a natural death, and each was a hero of the Revolution.

Cornelius Vincent, another captive, returned eventually to Milton, where he lived, with his wife, until July 16, 1812, dying at the age of 76. A monument in Warrior Run cemetery marks the graves of Cornelius and his wife Phoebe Vincent.

Daniel Vincent, his son, also one of the captives, returned, and accidentally found his wife again while attending a sleighing party where she was visiting some friends in New Jersey.

Captain John Lytle, one of the signers of the Articles of Capitulation, returned to the scene of the fort, was again united with his wife and children, and removed them to Northumberland.

At the time of the destruction of Fort Freeland, Col. Hunter's left flank had been contracted from its former limits which extended to Lock Haven, to Milton, with his right very weak but intact.

In and about Fort Freeland, as a result of the attack, one hundred and eight settlers were killed or led away as prisoners of war, not alone by Indians in their savage and cruel treachery, but as well by the organized militia of Great Britain. This heavy toll, to which should be added those killed among the British and their Indian allies, numbering possibly as many more, marks this as a definite battle of the Revolution, with the magazine and army stores at Fort Augusta, and the cutting off of the rear of General Sullivan's army, as the purpose of the attack, and it deserves to be identified as such.

Not only was it an event of great importance, but it marked the last cruel battle in this part of Pennsylvania, although affairs did not materially improve in this department until the close of the Revolution.

The story of Fort Freeland and its defenders is now told; it will always kindle in our hearts that spark of patriotism which has ever since animated the men and women of the West Branch Valley. A monument should be erected on this sacred spot, which should be as imposing as those who defended it were patriotic; and it should proclaim to this and future generations that, instead of being merely an Indian attack upon defenseless and unprepared settlers, the event it commemorates was a well planned and successful battle, in which the British and their Indian allies captured and destroyed Fort Freeland, July 28, 1779.

The Lycoming Historical Society

STATED MEETINGS

SEASON 1920-1921

October 21, 1920

Address: "How Election Ballots Should be Marked" (Illustrated)—Hon. Max L. Mitchell.

Address: "Joseph Henderson McMinn; the Man and Historian"—Mr. O. R. Howard Thomson.

Address: "Joseph Henderson McMinn, The Collector" (Illustrated)—Mr. Boyd P. Rothrock.

November 18, 1920

Address: "The Williamsport Academy"—Bruce A. Hunt.

Address: "Some Historic Trees of the West Branch Valley"—Col. Henry W. Shoemaker.

January 20, 1921.

Address: "Some Newer Now and Thens"—Mr. Thomas Wood.

Address: "A Strong Man of the Revolution, John Brady, of Muncy"—Mr. Lewis E. Theiss.

Address: "Samuel Wallis and His Mansion at Muncy Farms" (Illustrated)—Dr. T. Kenneth Wood.

February 17, 1921

Address: "Redemptioners of Lycoming County"—Mr. Thomas W. Lloyd.

Address: "The Psychology of Archives"—Dr. Elliott C. Armstrong, D.D.

STATED MEETINGS

SEASON 1921-1922

October 20, 1921

Address: "New Light on Ancient Tales"—Mrs. Jessica P. Krom.

Address: "Pioneers of Pine Creek"—Mrs. Mary R. Wolcott.

Address: "Tales of Bridle Path, Highway and Packet"—Mrs. Julia R. Harris.

November 17, 1921

Address: "Settlements of German Pietists in Pennsylvania"—Rev. J. A. Weishaar.

January 19, 1922

Address: "Reminiscences of the Lycoming County Bar"—Mr. John G. Reading.

Address: "Some Early Forges of Lycoming County"—Mr. W. W. Champion.

February 16, 1922

Address: "Pennsylvania Manuscripts and Printed Matter in the Collections of the J. V. Brown Library and Historical Society"—Mr. O. R. Howard Thomson.

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SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Memorial Tree Committee

Appointed November 18, 1920, to secure records of all men and women of Lycoming County who while serving in the armed forces of the United States of America, or her Allies, or in one of the recognized Welfare Organizations, lost their lives in the World War and to commemorate their memory by the planting on the two sides of some public road in the County of an avenue of Pine Trees:

O. R. HOWARD THOMSON, Chairman
Harry Clay Bubb.
Maj. William P. Clarke.
Thomas W. Lloyd.
Charles T. Logue.
Mrs. Margaret Geddes Lundy.
Dr. T. Kenneth Wood.
S. Van Brown.

The records of 131 men and women (with official confirmations for all save one man who lost his life with the Italian Army) are on file; pine trees, from the State nurseries have been promised by Chief Forester Pinchot; a contribution of \$100 towards the expenses of the work was received from Women's Food Conservation Committee of Lycoming County; and arrangements for raising the additional amount needed practically completed.

The actual planting of the trees is, however, held up owing to the receipt of an official notice from the State Highway Department advising the committee that the department will not prevent such mutilation of the trees as may be deemed necessary in the interest of the wires of the telephone and telegraph companies strung along the highway.

INDIAN TRAIL COMMITTEE

Appointed February 17, 1921, to prepare and print a map and report of the Indian trails of the West Branch Valley.

KATHARINE W. BENNET, Chairman.

Mrs. Katharine L. Beeber.

William P. Beeber.

Mary E. Crocker.

Hon. Emerson Collins.

Hon. Frederic A. Godcharles.

Mrs. Aimee S. Hastings.

Glenn B. Hastings.

Mrs. Sylvia B. Hays.

Bruce Hunt.

H. P. Lincoln.

Thomas W. Lloyd.

Mrs. Margaret Geddes Lundy.

Hon. Max L. Mitchell.

Mrs. Agnes W. Rhoads.

Joseph G. Rhoads.

Mrs. Mabel Ord Shoemaker.

Col. Henry W. Shoemaker.

O. R. Howard Thomson.

Margaret Wilson.

Mrs. Clara Wood.

Dr. T. Kenneth Wood.

Lycoming Historical Society

PROCEEDINGS AND PAPERS

No. 3

JOSEPH HENDERSON McMINN

Corrigenda and Addenda

Page 14: Note 3.

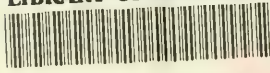
Change: "Lycoming Chapter, D. A. R.," to read, "Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R."

Add: The Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R., under the militant leadership of its Regent, Mrs. J. P. Krom, has since Mr. McMinn delivered his speech redeemed the Pine Creek Burying Grounds and the graves of fourteen of the soldiers of the Revolution therein buried have been suitably marked.

The Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R., has also marked in the Antes Burying Ground the graves of Col. Antes, of his son, and of the six soldiers, killed by Indians, first to be there buried. Upon the dissolution of the Antes Memorial Association, that association turned over to the Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R., a small fund remaining in its treasury, the turn over being conditional upon the Chapter agreeing to keep the graveyard in order. Both the fund and trust were accepted by the Chapter. The graveyard is now fenced in. In 1917 the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and the Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R., erected a boulder, with tablet commemorating the Fort. The bolder is about one-half mile northeast of the actual site.

(Information received from Mrs. Jessica P. Krom, Regent, Fort Antes Chapter, D. A. R.)

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